

# The Library Assistant:

*The Official Organ of the Library Assistants' Association.*

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS.

### DECEMBER MEETING.

A meeting will be held at the **Central Public Library, Lavender Hill, Battersea, S.W.**, on **Wednesday, December 11th**, at 7.30 p.m.

Lawrence Inkster, Esq., Hon. F.L.A., will preside.

The programme is as under:—

7.30 p.m. **Junior paper:** **Richard Wright, Croydon Central Lending Library.** "Staff Guilds, Clubs and Reading Circles."

8.15 p.m. Conference on "**THE EDUCATION OF THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT.**"

To be opened in brief papers by:—

**W. Benson Thorne, District Librarian, Bromley, Poplar.**

**Henry T. Coutts, Librarian, North Library, Islington.**

**Miss M. Gilbert, Librarian-in-Charge, North Branch, Fulham.**

We wish to draw special attention to the Conference on the subject of professional and general education, with which three of the papers will deal. The question is one of vital importance, and cannot be too often discussed. A large and representative meeting is confidently hoped for.

Clapham Junction is the nearest station to the Library. Trains from Waterloo and Victoria. Buses from all parts.

### Afternoon Visit.

On the same day as the above meeting, it has been arranged to visit **St. Paul's Cathedral Library**, by kind permission of the Rev. W. P. Besley, M.A., Cathedral Librarian. Members are requested to meet at the West Entrance at 3 o'clock.

The Chairman (Mr. Thorne) has been to considerable trouble to arrange this visit, and it is hoped, therefore, that members will attend in large numbers. Owing to the afternoon service at the Cathedral the tour of inspection must commence **promptly at 3 o'clock**. Members should assemble at the place of meeting shortly before that hour.

### ASSOCIATION OF ASSISTANT LIBRARIANS OF IRELAND.

The next meeting of this Association will be held at the **Ballymacarrett Branch Library, Belfast**, on **Wednesday, December 11th**, at 3.30 p.m., when the following papers will be read and discussed:—

**Mr. D. Simpson.** "The Use and Abuse of Works of Fiction."

**Mr. W. Moore.** "The Rate Limit."

### NOVEMBER MEETING.

Following the visit to St. Bride Institute, recorded on another page, a meeting of the L.A.A. was held at the Central Public Library and Cuming Museum, Southwark, on Wednesday evening, November 13th. There was a large attendance.

The members were cordially received by Mr. R. W. Mould (Chief Librarian), who had generously provided tea, and were afterwards conducted over the Library and Museum. The meeting was held in the Reference Library, under the chairmanship of Mr. J. Mallen Hale (Chairman of the Southwark Libraries Committee). Mr. H. Rutherford Purnell (Croydon Public Libraries) read the paper on "Local Literature and its Collection," which is printed in this number. A brief discussion followed, and the members then proceeded, by invitation of the Chairman, to the Public Hall, where a performance of Mendelssohn's "Elijah" was to be given under the auspices of the Southwark Borough Council. The ever-popular oratorio received excellent treatment at the hands of a large and capable choir and orchestra, and was much enjoyed.

#### Discussion.

Mr. Headicar thought that a great amount of political matter, such as Mr. Purnell suggested should be kept at the public library, was already collected at the offices of various political organisations where it was of greater value. He believed that much local literature was destroyed through ignorance, and he instanced a recent act of a local rector who caused a number of church registers to be destroyed because the shelves on which they were stored were required for another purpose.

Mr. Stewart said that the chief difficulty in regard to the formation of a local collection was the duplication of local literature in a county; it was often very difficult to settle which town should collect the literature. For example, the county town of Surrey is Guildford, but he considered that Croydon was the more important town, and should therefore be the depository of Surrey literature. The proper place for the storage of local documents dealing with the administration of local authorities was not, in his opinion, the town hall, but the public library.

Mr. Chambers was of opinion that Mr. Purnell's suggestion to collect everything would prove too comprehensive in practice. Before starting to collect local literature, hard and fast rules should be laid down as to what should be included and excluded. Works on the history and topography of the district and books by men who had spent their whole lives in the

district would, of course, be included, but he did not think it wise or necessary to collect all the works of authors who had spent only a brief period of their lives in the locality. If this were carried out the whole library would soon resolve itself into a local collection.

Mr. George Potter, who described himself as the oldest collector of local literature present, said he would collect everything as far as he could. He would collect the works of celebrated authors who were in any way connected with the district; he would go further, and collect if possible the paintings of local artists of note. He suggested that accounts of local sales, especially land sales, should be collected, because they often included plans which would be of exceeding value to those who desired in the future to trace the bounds of such property.

Mr. Thorne, in moving a vote of thanks to Mr. Purnell for his excellent paper, stated that he was in sympathy with the suggestion that everything should be collected, but he would not go quite so far as Mr. Potter. Library assistants might enhance the value of the local collection by drawing the attention of the librarian to items of local interest which came under their notice.

Mr. Coutts, after speaking upon the extent to which one could go in the collection of local literature, seconded the vote of thanks, which was carried unanimously.

Mr. Purnell replied briefly to the points raised in the discussion, and thanked the meeting for its appreciation of his paper, after which Mr. Sayers proposed and Mr. Young seconded a hearty vote of thanks to the Chairman, the South-west Public Libraries Committee, and the Chief Librarian, Mr. R. W. Mould, for the hospitality and warm welcome the members had received.

#### VISIT TO ST. BRIDE INSTITUTE.

The visit to this Institute on the afternoon of Wednesday, November 13th, was moderately well attended, and proved very interesting. The Technical Libraries were perhaps the chief attraction, an exhibition of books illustrating the development of the Roman letter being specially arranged. This was much appreciated, the members spending considerable time in a careful examination of the various volumes. Afterwards the well-equipped Printing School (Typographic and Lithographic), the fine gymnasium, rifle range, general libraries, etc., were inspected, the working of the different departments being explained and the questions of the curious being courteously answered. The visit was greatly enjoyed by all present, and the thanks of the Association are due to Messrs. Harrap, Lange and Peddie for the trouble they took to make the visit so pleasant an occasion.

## LOCAL LITERATURE AND ITS COLLECTION.

By H. RUTHERFORD PURNELL, Croydon Public Libraries.

The need for collections of books and literary matter illustrating in detail the history of particular districts has existed since the time that an interest was first taken in records of the past, but a systematic collection of literature of the kind has only become possible with the advent of public libraries. Before these institutions became a feature in the life of the most important towns the accumulation of the literature of separate localities was carried out only by the special interest of private people, and the material gathered, it may be during many years and with great difficulty, was always liable to become destroyed or dispersed by the carelessness or lack of interest of succeeding members of the family. In places where such collections have passed into the keeping of libraries where they will remain permanently, they take a place among their richest treasures. The great national libraries have many such, of which I need only mention the valuable Gough collection in the Bodleian Library. Though illustrating a wider field than is represented in the usual local collections, it is essentially a local collection. The founder chose as his field the British Isles, and gathered together every form of book or manuscript that he could find relating to British topography. The result is one of the most useful as well as most valuable of the Bodleian possessions. The Bodleian Library is also a local collector in a stricter sense in that it has during nearly the whole period of its existence of over three hundred years, stored up every scrap relating to Oxford that could be obtained.

It is perhaps unnecessary to speak further of the need for these collections, since nearly every library has by this time formed one of some sort. I will endeavour to point out the aim to be pursued in building them up. "Get everything" are words that might well form a text to be adopted by every librarian in gathering the material pertaining to his district. This point has recently occupied the attention of the mysterious and I am inclined to say over-frivolous body known as "The Pseudonyms." Their contribution to the subject cannot be said to be a wonderful example of learning, nor is it intended to be; but one or two of their hints are not by any means to be despised. The first item on their list of desirable acquisitions, for instance, is a tram ticket, a truly unworthy object upon which to bestow any care or thought. But a tram ticket can

illustrate two important points that I wish to emphasise. The first one is as to the all embracing nature of the collection. One of the first experiments in tramways was tried in the county of Surrey, and is now known as the Old Croydon Tram Road. Though this line was commenced only eighty or ninety years ago, and was in existence at a comparatively recent date, the exact route followed after reaching Croydon is a matter of conjecture. If some of the tickets in use on this line were in existence they might easily form a clue to the stopping-places, and even establish beyond doubt the exact bearings of the system.

The second point of importance illustrated by means of the humble tram ticket is the permanence of these collections. It is always necessary to bear in mind that any accumulations of the kind are formed to remain as long as the library is in existence, and we believe that this will be as long as the town itself. I think it was Macaulay who said that the common-places of one generation are the treasured relics of the next. It is impossible for us to decide as to what will be of value to future generations, and the collections ought accordingly to be made as representative as possible. What a priceless treasure would be a tram ticket or its equivalent discovered in the ruins of one of the ancient cities of Egypt!

I hope you will not think that I have unduly laboured the point of the tram ticket, nor that I wish to infer that time should be wasted in accumulating rubbish. The collections must always be built up with method, and tram tickets and matter of a similar kind given a position in accordance with their comparative importance or unimportance.

The contents of the local collection will consist primarily of books obviously belonging to it, such as histories and topographies. For the purchase of older works, second-hand booksellers' catalogues will provide one of the most important sources of increase. But there are other means of adding to it and obtaining important material which should not be neglected. I refer to the official publications of the district, that can nearly always be obtained as donations from the local authorities; such as the minutes of council meetings and of other public bodies. Literature issued by candidates for Parliament will also form an interesting and valuable item, and can usually be obtained by means of a written application to the candidates. Municipal election literature, too, is well worthy of preservation. Printed matter of this kind will in my opinion increase in value, especially since it is certain that very few copies will survive. It may be that the library copies of this matter will be the only ones to remain at the end of a few years. The list of desirable material might be extended still further, but it must

be left to the librarians of each library to gather what they can and build up their collections according to their own circumstances. I will only mention Parish and School magazines, all of which should be preserved; and most valuable of all, the local manuscript records, too often left to suffer from the need for a suitable storehouse in which to place them, and even to be destroyed by want of care. If necessary a strong room or safe might be provided to ensure their safety against any possibility of accident.

In forming a local collection a difficulty is often found in deciding as to what shall be the area represented. Should it be confined to the town in which the library is situated, or is it necessary that a whole county should be included, or even a larger area. As far as it is possible to make a rule where local conditions are so liable to variation, the principal library in each county might give its attention to the formation of a representative collection of the literature of the whole county as well as pay special attention to its own town. It is rarely possible for a library to go beyond these bounds, and unnecessary if each county possessed its own local collection. Where several libraries exist in a county it is an ideal arrangement for the principal one to gather together as complete a collection of the entire literature as possible, and each of the other libraries to confine its attention more particularly to the district immediately surrounding the town in which it is situated. Not only would the arrangement ensure one full county collection to which readers could be referred from other places at no great inconvenience, but it would also avoid the spending of undue sums of money by each library in the county. In this way public libraries might become to the county what the national libraries are to the whole country. I would even venture to suggest the forming of what I might term a county Copyright Act, making compulsory the presentation of local literature to the public libraries; but I fear that it is looking rather too far in advance.

In turning to the administrative part of the subject of local collections, classification and cataloguing are of first importance. As regards the former it would be difficult, and perhaps impossible, to draw up a scheme that would satisfy every local collection. Each place must necessarily adopt an arrangement in accordance with its own needs. But as a suggestion I can outline the system in use with the Surrey books in the Croydon Library. It has the advantage of simplicity, and could easily be adapted to the requirements of any similar collection. The principal items to be dealt with are generally found to be histories, topographical works, natural histories, books pub-

lished locally and by local authors, and books about local persons. In the Surrey collection a topographical arrangement has been adopted; that is to say, after the general works relating to the whole district, the books are arranged according to their particular locality, all the works relating to each place coming together. The books relating to the various places can then be further classified by their subject. To illustrate my meaning by means of the collection of Surrey books already referred to, I will take as an example three towns, Croydon, Kingston and Reigate; the general Surrey books receive a number 60, Croydon 70, Kingston 80, and Reigate 90. Each of these numbers can be subdivided decimally: 601 histories of Surrey, 602 descriptions, 603 biographical works, and so on. Croydon books would be similarly divided: 701 histories, 702 topographies, 703 biographies, 704 books printed in Croydon, etc. The same arrangement would be adopted for the other places in the county, and the numbers can be further subdivided as required.

The cataloguing of the collection is of equal importance with the classification. The rules in force for the rest of the library should apply to the local collection as far as possible. But I strongly urge the necessity of making the local catalogue as full as possible. The fullest bibliographical details should be given, particularly the size, number of pages, place of publication and printing, and any specially interesting features. If the libraries in each county arranged to co-operate in the way already suggested, and each library supplied the others with copies of its local catalogue, a bibliography might always be available of the county literature, and a liberal scheme of inter-change of books would ensure as perfect a local collection as it is possible to obtain.

There is a further importance attaching to the careful cataloguing of local collections in view of the catalogue being published to form a bibliography of the district more or less complete according to the fulness of the collection. A kind of librarian's dream which is destined never to be realised is the compilation of a universal catalogue. Even a complete catalogue of English books is beyond the reach of possibility. The British Museum and other national libraries are omnivorous gatherers of books, especially English under the Copyright Act, but hundreds of books and pamphlets are published outside London of which they never hear, since the publishers may not think it necessary to send them. If each county had its own local collection fully catalogued and the catalogues printed, it would greatly facilitate any attempt towards a complete catalogue.



In dealing with miscellaneous matter which accumulates, such as election handbills already referred to, and even an occasional tram ticket, if I have been able to convince anyone of their utility, it is well to adopt a kind of scrap-book. Anything which cannot be bound in book form will then be able to find a place. A very effective filing system can be made of loose sheets of stiff paper, varying in size to accommodate papers of different sizes. The papers can be mounted on these sheets, classified in the same order as the rest of the collection, and stored in boxes made to the shape and size of the mounts. Everything that possibly can, should of course be bound in volumes, and the boxes of mounts left for the things with difficulty so treated.

The usefulness of local collections can be considerably extended by the addition of all the prints and pictures of any kind illustrating the district, that can be obtained.

The method just described of mounting them on sheets of stiff paper but uniform in size is in every way suitable for the print collection, and for photographs and picture post-cards. A department of work that is impossible for public libraries to undertake, at any rate at present, in view of the smallness of the funds available, is the carrying out of a systematic photographic survey. But I can instance two counties, Surrey and Sussex, and there may be others, in which a society of amateur photographers has been formed for this purpose. I believe that the first one ever organised is the "Photographic Survey and Record of Surrey." The object of this society as outlined in its syllabus is "to preserve, by permanent photographic process, records of antiquities, anthropology, buildings of interest, geology, natural history, passing events of local or historic importance, portraits of notable persons, old documents, rare books, prints, maps and scenery, so as to give a comprehensive survey of what is valuable and representative in the County of Surrey." The result of the labours of the members up to the present time is a collection of over 2,500 photographs. In places where building operations are so extensive as to alter landscapes in a space of time about equal to a library assistant's holiday, this work is a necessity. I cannot think of any place more favourable for storing the collections thus formed than public libraries, where they form a supplement to the local collection of immense practical value. The photographs of the society that I have just mentioned are kept in the Croydon Public Library.

My endeavour has not been to deal exhaustively with the subject of local collections, since that would be impossible in the short time at my disposal; but to indicate the main lines to



be followed in building them up. I have tried to make mention of all its phases, but it may be that I have omitted many important details. I can only conclude with the words of Edmund Burke that "It is not the extent of the subject which must prescribe our bounds, for what subject does not branch out to infinity? It is the nature of our particular scheme, and the single point of view in which we consider it, which ought to put a stop to our researches."

### REGISTRATION: AN URGENT NEED.

By W. GEO. CHAMBERS, Plumstead Public Library.

Those present at the Tenth Annual Dinner of the Library Assistants' Association would notice that one topic permeated almost every speech, and assistants may well congratulate themselves upon the fact that Registration is now one of the principal subjects of discussion in the library world. To those who are striving to qualify themselves, by examination and otherwise, to occupy the highest positions in the profession, this subject is of immense importance, and it was gratifying to hear the remarks of Mr. E. A. Baker, the Hon. Sec. of the Library Association Education Committee, and to know that he is so actively supporting the movement.

At the present time the matter is being considered by two Committees—a sub-committee of the L.A.A., and a special committee, consisting of Messrs. Baker, Brown, Burgoyne, Duckworth, McKnight, Peddie, Philip, G. T. Shaw, and Sparke, formed during the Conference week at Glasgow. It is hoped that a way will be found to amalgamate these committees, or else to add representatives of the L.A.A. to the latter.

It has long been a matter for regret that librarianship does not possess an exclusively professional association. True we have the Library Assistants' Association and the Society of Public Librarians, but neither of these societies does more than represent a section of the profession, and the first step to be taken to procure registration is the formation of an exclusively professional society, which will be representative of all sections of our craft. When formed this body should register itself under the Companies' Acts, and include in its Articles of Association a clause providing for the establishment and maintenance of a Register. In the By-laws of the Society it should be clearly stated that only duly qualified men will be elected, and the roll of membership will, under the terms specified in the Articles of Association, before referred to, become the professional Register of librarianship.

There will be some difficulty, and much difference of opinion, as to who to include in the original Register and who to exclude. There is not much doubt, however, that if the Register is to have any status, all librarians practising as such at the time it is started must be included. This, moreover, is in complete accord with precedent, legal and otherwise. Assistants, too, with certain qualifications must also be admissible, but once the original Register is closed there must be but one way of obtaining entry, viz. : by examination.

The examinations of the Library Association should be adopted for this purpose, and only those who have passed in all six sections, unless they have received merit or honours in the four technical subjects, should be admitted.

The formation of this proposed Institute of Librarians need not affect any existing Association; there is much need, and plenty of room for it, and when formed it should become affiliated to the societies now in existence.

The position of the L.A.A. in regard to this Society, if formed, is quite clear. Whilst some of our members will be immediately eligible for election, the majority, I suppose, will not be, but we shall serve as a feeder to the new Society, our members seeking election as qualified. This does not mean that when a member is elected to the Institute his membership of the L.A.A. must cease, but that he will then belong to both bodies; joining the Institute for purposes of registration, and retaining allegiance to the L.A.A. for its general work on behalf of assistants, registered and unregistered.

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## SURVEY OF THE MONTH.

By the Hon. Secretary.

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Had not pressure of work and pressure upon our space precluded the appearance of our usual Survey last month, we should have remarked that the thirteenth Session opened as propitiously as any previous one. That ubiquitous person, the clerk of the weather, had for some unknown reason, a grudge against our Inaugural Meeting; the evening was as unpleasant outdoors as one could imagine; but, in spite of that, the Meeting itself was an unqualified success, and if we may forecast the session from that meeting and from the crowded meeting at the Southwark Central Library on November 13<sup>th</sup>, we may expect an even more profitable session than our last. It has been a season of Inaugural Meetings. The presidential inaugural at Belfast, printed in our last number, was stimulat-

ing reading; and from it we may imply that, if our Irish brethren manipulate their proceeding carefully, the authorities of Queen's College may be persuaded to assist them in promoting the education of their members. We trust this may be so.

The Annual Dinner, although not quite as well attended as last year unfortunately, was another completely successful function. Our members have learned the art of enjoying themselves, the programme was excellent, the speeches interesting, the menu without reproach. There is certainly no other such gathering of librarians that can be compared with it. Two of the speakers touched upon the subject of registration, one occupying a large place in our thoughts at present. Very few of us, however, are quite clear as to the meaning of registration, and what it involves. It is premature to speculate upon the decisions either of the sub-committee of our Association appointed to consider the matter, or the interesting but hardly representative committee appointed by some members of the Library Association at the Glasgow Meeting. On one thing the latter is seemingly persuaded, that an Institute of Librarians must be formed whose roll of members shall form the desired register. But we need a somewhat higher standard of professional attainment before such a Register is possible; we need a committee which shall consist of the leading librarians of the country to initiate it, not one that includes only three of them; but the clearest issue is, how will such an Institute, if possible, affect existing associations? Adversely, undoubtedly. Mr. Baker was doubtless in earnest when he said that such an Institution would not draw a single member from allegiance to existing associations, but as half the librarians and three-fifths of the assistant librarians of England declare their inability to pay subscriptions to these, how can they add an Institute subscription to their list? It merely confuses the issue to say the Institute will not affect the question. In saying this we wish it to be clearly understood that in this or in anything we say, we voice the opinions of the Hon. Secretary, not necessarily those of the L.A.A. If an Institute will benefit the profession and the movement, let us have it, but we must look all round the question first.

Recently our Hon. Treasurer expressed his opinions in these pages upon the ethics of anonymity and although we might not altogether agree that anonymous correspondence should be excluded from our pages—because that correspondence is at least supervised by the Publications Sub-Committee—we do believe that such anonymous opinions as are expressed by the writer calling himself "Chief Librarian" in *The L.G.O.* should be either suppressed or signed, so that unreflecting people may judge of their value.

Generally speaking, the writer is friendly to ourselves, but most of his paragraphs are half-informed, ill-digested pronouncements written in a journalese that would do credit to certain half-penny evening papers. Recently he wrested our statement about the unwisdom of many of Mr. Carnegie's gifts from its context, and headed it, "May I not do what I will with mine own," accusing us of confusion of thought. The heading condemns the writer entirely; no man has a right to circulate wealth indiscriminately, whether it be his own or not; and, be it remarked, a millionaire's money rarely is his own. Besides this, every week the officers and committee of both the L.A. and the L.A.A. are treated to offensive patronage by "Chief Librarian"; and lately—to show how brilliantly informed he is—he referred to a course of library talks to children at Gravesend as though he thought they had never been known before; one paragraph on the L.A. examinations showed complete ignorance of the conditions of the diploma, and another showed the writer's complete innocence of knowledge of the best-known parts of our poetical literature.

A more pleasant subject is the Annual Meeting of the Yorkshire Branch of the L.A.A. at Leeds on December 5th. Everything points to the flourishing condition of the Branch, and the message of goodwill sent from the Annual Dinner was an earnest of the excellent relations existing between it and the Association. The Chairman of the L.A.A. is to address the Meeting on "For Progress," while the Hon. Secretary will deal with "The Forward Look in Librarianship"—these in addition to addresses by the President and other members of the Branch. We hope all our Yorkshire colleagues will endeavour to make this meeting of historic interest.

The Sessional Programme of the Library Association has reached us. It is excellent in quality, well balanced, and beautifully printed. We notice with pleasure that three members of our Committee are to read papers.

#### ASSOCIATION OF ASSISTANT LIBRARIANS OF IRELAND.

A meeting of this Association—the Irish Branch of the L.A.A.—was held at the Falls Road Branch Library, Belfast, on Wednesday, November 13th, Mr. J. Goldsborough in the chair.

Mr. J. Gourley (Belfast, Chairman of the Branch) in a paper on "Staff Relations" asked assistants to treat all readers with equal courtesy, and, instead of attributing unkind thoughts and acts to borrowers, to remember that the fault sometimes lay on their side of the counter. He also urged the younger

members to take an intelligent interest in their work, and thus to contribute to the harmonious working of the whole staff. This would obviate the necessity of too much interference by the seniors, and encourage them to give more important work to the younger assistants who showed their ability.

A discussion followed, all present agreeing with the views expressed in the paper.

Mr. J. Scott (Belfast) then read a paper on "Juvenile Rooms in Public Libraries." He thought more attention should be given to the juvenile reader. Every library should have a separate room for children, and provide suitable periodicals and a collection of books to help them in their school-work. The system of fines as applied to this department should be revised; the age-limit, if not actually abolished, should be so reduced as to admit any child who could read or write; and finally, an assistant with some long library experience should supervise the room, and not, as was so often the case, a junior assistant.

An animated discussion followed, sustained by Messrs. Lavery, Simpson, Moore, Wilson, Rowan and Coulson.

The meeting terminated with a vote of thanks to Messrs. Gourley and Scott. The members afterwards inspected the new Branch Library, which is nearly ready for the opening.

#### ANNUAL DINNER OF THE LIBRARY ASSISTANTS' ASSOCIATION.

That most enjoyable of all functions in connection with the L.A.A., the Annual Dinner, took place at Anderton's Hotel, Fleet Street, E.C., on Wednesday evening, November 20th. Mr. W. Benson Thorne, Chairman of the Association, presided, and the attendance was good, although somewhat below the average. The visitors included Messrs. E. Wyndham Hulme (Patent Office), G. H. Palmer, B.A. (National Art Library, South Kensington), R. A. Peddie (St. Bride Institute), L. S. Jast (Croydon), G. Preece (Stoke Newington) and E. A. Baker, M.A. (Woolwich), while several ladies also graced the proceedings.

After an excellent repast the Chairman proposed the usual loyal toasts, and these were received with enthusiasm.

Mr. E. Wyndham Hulme then submitted the toast "Librarianship." He said the education of the librarian might be divided into (a) training in method, (b) acquisition of a first hand acquaintance with books. There were strong reasons for giving precedence to the teaching of method in the L.A. educational curriculum; for the code of rules which made up the body of sound library economy was readily systematised for and easily digested by the student. To attempt original work in bibliography without preliminary training in the art of cataloguing or without initiation into the forms of work already published was to court certain failure. On the other hand, while method could readily be taught and assimilated, the difficulties in the way of the systematic teaching of bibliography were very great. Books about books were numerous rather than sufficient; in many cases their value was purely literary. Personal inspection of books of reference and visits to libraries were good in their way; but no one, without long previous training, could claim to know a bibliography merely

by inspection. He must have used it with the object for which the bibliography was compiled before he was competent to advise others in the use of it. The science of books could not at present be reduced to a series of lectures, but could only be acquired by practice, *i.e.*, by using books with a definite object. Often the student would find that voluntary work undertaken only indirectly with the motive of self-education had insensibly increased his knowledge of books and given him a grip of his subject which the reading of text-books and lecture courses had failed to do. The speaker emphasised the educational value of the work of abstracting articles in the professional journals both for its mental training and for training in the use of reference works. The new arrangements proposed at the London School of Economics for housing in one room all the bibliographical collections entrusted to them were also suggested as offering a field for volunteer work.

Modern National Bibliography, *i.e.*, a knowledge of English printed works during the last 200 years, was a valuable qualification, which could be assessed, and if necessary converted into £ s. d. The history of the British Museum catalogue was familiar to all. With the completion of its first supplement in 1905 they had a record of English bibliography to the year 1899. After the first burst of national exaltation which succeeded its compilation, came a period of reflection. Dr. Sidney Lee had long ago warned them that the Museum Library was not representative of the national output, and that some thousands of works were recorded in the Dictionary of National Biography which were not to be found in the British Museum. He proposed to expand Dr. Lee's statement by his own experience, based partly upon a few notes made of recent years and supplemented by an examination of some 900 consecutive entries of works added to the Library of the Patent Office. For statistical purposes, such a search was practically valueless; but it was sufficient to indicate the classes of literature not properly represented in the Museum and to give a fair idea of their value. So far as the output of the London publishers was concerned the Museum catalogue stood the test fairly well. It would be difficult to point to cases of standard works, which had passed through several editions, of which the British Museum possessed no copy.

On the other hand, their sets of these editions were seldom complete. This required no illustration. But when they turned to the output of the local presses, of private firms and individuals, of inventors, promoters and pamphleteers, the percentage of works in the Museum experienced a sharp drop. Probably they did not possess 50 per cent. of the total output. He however was not concerned with statistics. It was with the intrinsic value of the above literature that he dealt; it was literature running to waste; and there was no one to check the daily destruction of works, the loss of which in a few years hence they would learn too late to regret. Much was irrevocably lost. The greater part was wholly unrecorded. He would now let his list tell its own tale.

On leaving the office that afternoon he had received a prospectus of a work on "Transfer printing on pottery," an invention of great commercial value to this country, generally attributed to Sadler of Liverpool. But that work, he believed, would show that the invention belonged to Thomas Laurenceson, an engraver, whose work "The Mysteries of Nature and Art" was advertised in a Liverpool newspaper in 1757. No copy of this work was now available. The Liverpool bibliographers were sceptical as to its existence, but there was evidence that a copy was in private hands a few years ago. William Evans' "Art and history of the pottery business" was a poorly printed 12mo. (Shelton, 1846), but it was of sufficient importance to bring over some German experts to prove its publication. In this, he believed, they failed. Subsequently a correct account of the work was found in the bibliography of Staffordshire by Rupert Simms, whose name he mentioned with the respect due to one who

had turned out work of lasting value under great personal disadvantages. This work, like Laurenceson's, was a reprint from a local paper. Evans' work is mainly a collection of receipts from the private notebooks of manufacturers. About twenty years ago or more there were at least three editions of a Book of Ceramic Receipts printed at Hanley, one of which was written in French, presumably for greater security. These were privately hawked about the Potteries at prices ranging from £20 per copy to a more modest figure. There was no trace of any of these works in the British Museum Catalogues. From ceramics to glass was a short step. The facts relating to the introduction of glassmaking from France into this country were first put together by the late Mr. H. S. Grazebrook in his genealogical account of three Huguenot families published at Stourbridge in 1877. The work was indispensable to a student of English glassmaking. Again speaking from a fairly intimate knowledge of the subject he had often heard it regretted that no catalogue had been compiled of the remains of English mediaeval and renaissance stained glass in our churches and cathedrals. But on paying a visit to Mr. Palmer he was shown a single proof copy of such a work compiled by the South Kensington authorities some thirty years ago. A copy has now been made, and he hoped that its publication would be undertaken by some competent archaeologist. These still-born children of the press ought to be recorded. The first attempt at a chronological history of printing was made in 1861 by W. G. Atkinson, the first librarian of the Patent Office. The work was stopped at p. 192 and the type distributed. Recently two eighteenth century pamphlets had thrown quite a new light upon certain periods of English patent law. As in Laurenceson's case there was reason to suspect deliberate suppression of material in the case of the first of these pamphlets, for the British Museum copy was minus the important section, viz., the judge's summing up. A perfect copy was found at length in the Bodleian. The second pamphlet was a miserable eight page quack medicine circular, but this furnished proof that the jurisdiction of the Privy Council, believed to have been obsolete for a century and a half, was still exercised. In conclusion he asked them to accept his statement that modern bibliography had an economic value, and that there was an urgent need for its proper recording and preservation. With these words he asked them to drink to the health of the Profession.

Mr. Baker, in responding, said that on occasions like this it was almost a solecism to be serious. Frivolity was the only thing to be taken seriously. There was one serious matter, however, closely associated with the subject of the toast, which he would like to refer to, and that was the proposal now under consideration to form an Institute of Librarians. A committee elected at a public meeting in Glasgow was now considering this question, which concerned the members of the L.A.A. most urgently, and he trusted that an opportunity would be given shortly for the L.A.A. to have representatives on that body. He was glad to hear that library assistants were also considering this question of registration, which was one of the main objects of the proposed Institute. He would like to say, however, that he hoped there would be no tendency to put the profession before the library. Does the library exist in order to supply us with bread and cheese, or does the profession exist for the sake of the library? He hoped they would always put the library first, and he considered that the toast to which he responded last year, namely, that of the Library Association, was equally honourable with that he was responding to now, because the Library Association represented the library movement. If he thought that through the establishment of a professional institute the Library Association would lose members, he would for his part at once withdraw from the proposal, for he felt that his allegiance to the Library Association had the first place. The next toast upon the programme, i.e.,



"Ourselves," seemed almost superfluous, for the L.A.A. represented the profession in a way no other existing society did, inasmuch as it was the only strictly professional body. When they came to drink the next toast, he hoped they would remember that in aiming at the highest good of the library as an institution, they were really exalting the profession of librarianship.

Mr. R. A. Peddie next proposed "Ourselves." He reminded them that his connection with the L.A.A. began when the Association was formed thirteen years ago. It was interesting to look back and see what had been accomplished. At first the Association was regarded with some suspicion, but he believed it had fully justified its existence. Associateship of the Library Association could not take the place of membership of the L.A.A. It was hardly necessary to say this now, but it was necessary thirteen years ago. The L.A.A. had organised the assistant branch of the profession in this country in a way that had been done in no other country. He would just refer to one other matter. It was most desirable that a really professional association or Institute should be formed. Such an Institute would work with the Library Association and not in opposition to it, but membership, being based upon qualifications, would ensure a certain professional standing. A small committee was at present trying to formulate a scheme, and he hoped that together they would be able to so organise the library profession in this country that the status of those engaged in it would not be lower than the status of the medical officer of health, the architect, the engineer, and others.

Mr. W. C. Berwick Sayers acknowledged the toast. In doing so he referred to the forthcoming annual meeting of the Yorkshire Branch, and suggested that a message of good will be sent from that gathering, a suggestion which met with unanimous approval.

Other toasts were "The Visitors," proposed by Mr. J. D. Young and responded to by Mr. G. H. Palmer, and "The Chairman," proposed by Mr. H. T. Coutts, the Chairman in his response asking those present to drink to the health of Mr. W. G. Chambers in recognition of the efforts he had made to ensure the success of the gathering. Before dispersing the company joined in singing "Auld Lang Syne."

During the evening pianoforte solos were rendered by Miss Amy Rees, songs by Miss F. G. Savage, Mr. Walter Rees and Mr. A. C. McCombe (humorous), and recitations by Mr. W. G. Watson. Miss Rees kindly acted as accompanist. To her, and to the other ladies and gentlemen who gave their assistance, the best thanks of the Committee are due. A word of thanks is also due to Mr. W. G. Chambers, who was responsible for the arrangements for the Dinner, and who is to be congratulated upon the success of it.

Letters of regret at inability to be present were received from Messrs. H. R. Tedder, H. D. Roberts, B. Kettle, H. Bond, J. H. Quinn, C. J. Courtney, H. V. Hopwood, F. M. Roberts, and a number of other librarians and assistants.

#### CORRECTION.

There is an error in the first instalment of Mr. Barr's article on "The Organisation of a Library Service." On page 6 the second paragraph was made to read: "Allowing 15 feet for the internal height of the ground floor, 14 feet for the first floor, and 15 feet additional for foundations and roof ridges, etc." The latter should be 10 feet.

#### APPOINTMENT.

\*Mr. J. C. DARBY, Senior Assistant, Bishopsgate Institute, E.C., has been appointed Senior Assistant in the Library of the Institute of Civil Engineers, Westminster.

\* Member of the L.A.A.